2: Redfield & Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938) 1939 NV9 Tzeltal NV9



The Indians manufacture and consume *chicha*, an alcoholic beverage fermented from sugar cane or maize. They drink larger quantities of rum prepared in Ladino-owned distilleries. *Pilico*, a combination of lime and tobacco, is chewed frequently, especially in Oxchuc, Tenejapa, and Cancuc.

Tenejapa is the only Tzeltal town that enjoys importance as a market center. Here a market is held every Sunday.

Pottery is made for sale outside the local community in Amatenango and in Tenango. In almost all the other communities the industry is practised in a rudimentary form merely to supply local needs. Blom and LaFarge observed and reported the techniques of pottery manufacture at Sivaca;[1] Villa limits his data to mentioning the industry there. Blom and LaFarge report, on hearsay, the method of making large, egg-shaped, three-handled water jars at Tenango; Villa observed and reported this industry. The former authors report that the clay used is "a light greenish brown colour."[2] Villa says that two kinds of clay, "white earth" and "red earth," are combined to form the paste. Villa also noted the tempering with a ground sandy limestone (*hi*); and the painting with a paint made from a soft stone from the river (*huxu-tzaik*). The pots and griddles are made from one kind of clay tempered with a different sandstone called *bax*. The method of firing described for Sivaca by Blom and LaFarge from hearsay, involving the preparation of "an A-roof, forming a long tunnel,"[3] was observed and photographed by Villa in Tenango. Villa was told that vessels after firing are filled with *pozole* in water to reduce the porosity.

In Tenejapa metates are made for export, and in Oxchuc halters, lead-ropes, nets and bags. The methods of weaving, net making and basketry, reported by Blom and LaFarge for Bachajon,[4] were not reported by Villa.

The type of habitation is the same throughout the whole region, although there are small variations from village to village. The houses are rectangular in form with four-sided roofs, thatched with grass, and with sides made of poles and clay. Only the houses of Chanal form an exception. The walls of these structures are in most cases of wood. The houses of Tenango present another exception in that they are the only ones where the roofs do not terminate in a ridge, but in a point; it is usual to cover this with an inverted pot. Houses are throughout divided into two rooms, one of which serves as living room and kitchen and the other as sleeping room. In some cases the kitchen is placed in the latter section. There is a single door in front; only in certain settlements to the north, as Chilón and Yajalon, where the influence of the white man has been greater, are houses to be seen with two doors and even some with small windows. The floor is always of packed earth.

The furnishings of the living room are limited in general to beds, improvised of boards placed on the ground or on logs, and covered with mats. The hammock is little used; it is generally reserved for children. The furnishings and domestic

[1] Blom and LaFarge 1927: 2: 343-345.
[2] *Ibid.*, 2: 183.
[3] *Ibid.*, 2: 344.
[4] *Ibid.*, 2: 345-349.

cf: Redfield & Villa Rojas E-4,5 (1938) 1939 | NV9 Tzeltal NV9



352 utensils pertaining to the other room include three tables of varying form and size. One of these, about 60 cm high, is called *akhintel*,[23] and serves as a support for the metate (*cha*). Another smaller table (*matzamaltè*) has three legs and is circular in form, it is used in making tortillas. The third table (*ucbaltè*), also small but quadrangular, is used in serving food. Three benches of hollow logs 415 (*tzantel*) and small chairs (*taburetes*) serve as seats. Deep baskets and gasoline 251 boxes are used for holding clothes. Hanging from the roof is always to be seen a disk made of vines (*likin-nab*). This is used to keep comestibles from the rats. The other implements are the griddle, pots, and other vessels of clay, and calabashes and gourds in various forms and dimensions.

343 Besides the fowl pen (*na-mut*) and the pigpen (*na-chitán*) it is common to [417] see near the house the temazcal, or steam bath (*pus*). It is made of clay and irregularly shaped stones, it is rectangular with a small door in front and a ventilator in the rear. It is usual to cover it with a small shelter of straw. The use of the temazcal [184] is common in the highlands. It is almost not to be found from Ococingo northward.

29 Each village has its own costume; however, local variations conform to a 184 certain pattern which changes according to the altitudes and climate. Thus, in the region of Los Altos the usual pattern of dress is the following: for men, short cotton trousers (*uex*)[24] and cotton shirt (*kú*) reaching to the knees, a sash (*chukichut*) of wool or cotton and in most cases red in color, a poncho (*tzotz*) made of wool and in most cases dark grey in color, a handkerchief (*chukkil*), a straw hat (*pixol*), and leather sandals (*xanab*), women wear a white blouse (*ku*) and a blue shirt (*tzequel*), both made either of wool or of cotton, and a red woolen sash (*chukichut*). Some women in going out-of-doors add a woolen *rebozo*. Women use also a cotton cloth (*tzitz-cal*) to carry small children. They wear no footgear.

In the tierra caliente the dress of the women is almost the same except that it is cleaner. On the other hand that of the men, although equally clean, presents marked differences: the trousers are longer and the shirt shorter, coming to resemble an open blouse or *guayabera*. The sash and the poncho cease to be indispensable [177] garments. It is in this region that there is most use of trousers and shirt in European style.

551 In Tenejapa, Starr found that the Indians had Tzeltal surnames. He says, 582 "We feel sure that these are *not* nicknames, but the old family names still pre- 114 served".[25] He does not give examples, and says nothing about any relation between these name-groups and marriage. Blom and LaFarge make no note of such names, and say "there are no formal restrictions on marriage."[26]

582 Villa found Indian surnames present in Chanal, Tenejapa, Cancuc, and Oxchuc, 551 and was told that marriage is not allowed, or is at least strongly discouraged, between persons of the same Indian surname. In Chanal an informant indicated that such

[184] [23] The names of these objects vary from one village to another; those which are described here were obtained in Chanal.

[24] The names of some of these garments vary likewise from one village to another; here Villa gives names used in Chanal.

[25] Starr, 1908, p. 73.

[26] Blom and LaFarge, 1927, 2:359.

342 lages of the lowlands where the houses have
[354] small windows, which improve ventilation
342 and illumination slightly. In places like
184 Chanal, where there is abundant lumber, the sides of the houses are built with wooden boards set vertically. The largest and best-built houses are in Tenejapa center.

Generally, the hut is divided into two rooms: the front is parlor and kitchen, the rear is bedroom. In Bachajon the rear room serves as bedroom and kitchen, the front room for sewing and grinding and the re-
[574] ception of visitors. In Amatenango del Valle the front of the house is open and
[323] used as a porch for visits. Ceramic work
[251] is also performed here. In one room of the house a bin of wood or reeds stores corn.
[343] Sometimes, small structures which serve as granaries are built inside the hut.

343 Among the auxiliary structures outside is
515 the temascal (*pus*) used for steam baths. Not every hut has a *pus* since one is enough to attend the needs of several neighboring families. The *pus* is a small room 1.5 m. high by 2 m. on each side, built of stones and clay. The roof is flat. Inside a hollow forms a hearth for heating stones. Water thrown on these red-hot stones produces the necessary steam. On the floor are boards on which people lie while taking the bath.
[184] Among the Tzeltal and Tzotzil the *pus* is
[757] not only for cleanliness but also for the cure
[846] of certain diseases and to strengthen women after childbirth. Sweat baths are more commonly taken in Tierra Fria than in Tierra Caliente.

417 The other structures near the hut are the chickencoop and the hogpen.

• 352 Furniture is limited to essential items. In the kitchen are the three hearth stones, the comal (*samet*), the grinding stone (*chá*), a bench or strong table to hold the metate (*ah-ken*), one or two small tables (*matz-malté* or *vebalté*) 25–39 cm. high and 30–40 cm. in diameter, and small benches 15–20 cm. high made of scooped-out tree trunks
415 (*tzanté*). Kitchen equipment includes earthenware (pans, pitchers, and jars) and

[P. 207-B]

containers made of jícara (*boch*) or tecomate (*tzu*). In the bedroom is a bed (*uaybal*) made of boards placed on four forked poles, usually with a sleeping mat on it. Only the very poor sleep on mats on the floor. Small chairs, wooden chests for clothes, baskets of all shapes and sizes, pita bags and nets, shelves made of wood ribs, and pegs for hanging clothes are scattered around the hut without order.

The most important article is the altar with the family cross. Its construction varies in different areas: it may be a plain small table made of tree trunks or better material. The altar is generally ornamented with pine needles. Occasionally, the figure of a saint is placed by the cross.

*Clothing and Ornaments*

Each community has its own style of clothing, which gives a sense of unity to its members and permits the observer to identify easily the groups during fiestas or market days. This variety applies only to a few items of clothing, which is basically the same for the entire region. Men's costume consists of short pants (*uesh*) and a long shirt (*nátil-kú*) which reaches the knee, both made of cloth that women weave; a red sash or belt (*chuj-chut*) of cotton, 10–15 cm. wide by 1.5 m. long; a palm hat (*pishol*); and leather sandals (*shanabil*). Residents of cold areas wear a woolen chamarra which is manufactured by the Chamulas. Women's costume consists of a skirt made of wool (*tzek*) or blue thick cloth, made in one piece and wrapped around the body with two pleats in front; it is belted at the waist by a red wool sash, which the Chamulas manufacture. Occasionally, they wear a wool rebozo. They tie their hair with a red woolen ribbon (*malal*) and wear earrings (*yulel-chikinil*) and glass necklaces (*ual*) bought in the city. Women always go barefoot, even during long trips. When outdoors they cover their heads with a cloth or wool fabric.

Each municipio has made of these clothes

[P. 208-A]

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón



123 Visiting such a house is not a mere, simple social affair. Here,
648 on a steep-sided and slippery natural hill, lived a family belonging to a notoriously exclusive people. Our hostess seemed suspicious of the visit at first, although one visitor was a "Melicano," one of the pair who had already acquired a good reputation with the Indians, and his guide, Señor Aguilar, was known to be a friend. Men in felt hats and boots seldom visited those houses for good purposes; at the best, they might be expected to make off with a quantity of eggs and tortillas without paying their value—at the worst, the head of the house might be haled away for forced labour, or there might be a fight, the pigs killed, and the little hut set afire. The family consisted of a married couple their small son, and two grown girls. On our first visit the wife alone was there. She was at first sullen and a little frightened, but becoming reassured by degrees, showed herself to be a placid, dignified woman, pleasant, neat, and in many ways an ideal type of the traditional housewife. After we had given medicine to one of the girls for cold, and to the husband for mild fever, with a gaudy chromo of a saint to decorate the family altar, they came [342] → to take us for granted, and allowed us to see unfolding the harmonious, dignified family life, with its feeling of unvoiced yet real affection that is so typical of the American Indian where European contact has been slight. The 342 [353] [356] little house, only half walled, and small—about 15 x 18½ feet—was always neat, its dirt floor swept clean, each small posession in its place. There was a faint smell of wood-smoke and earth, with the scent of the rich jungle drifting in, the sound of low-voiced talk, wind in grass, or the grind and thump of the metates, now and then laughter.

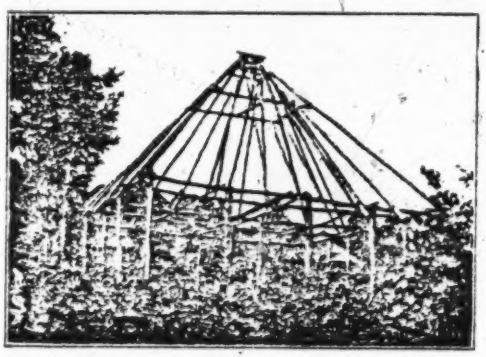


FIG. 287—Cancuc, Chis. Frame of house, illustrating type used in whole area.

The house was a rectangle, 4.90 x 4.20 meters (figs. 288-289), the front of the house being on a short side. The back and slightly less than half of the sides were walled with close-planted, upright [352] poles, without plastering. To wooden beds, *waixyivel*, like low tables, were built into the corners thus framed. Four corner-posts,

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón



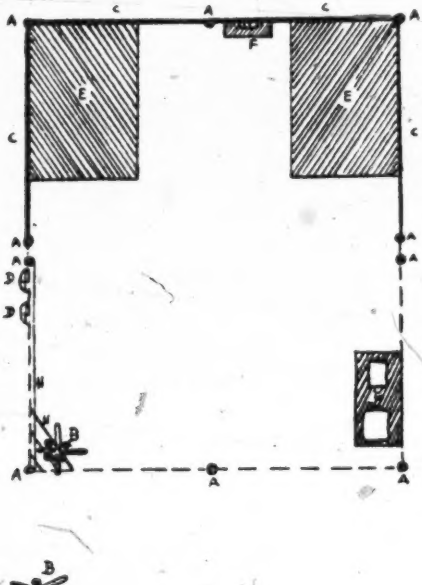


Fig. 286—El Encanto, Chis. Bachajon House. Plan. (Scale 1:100).

A. Uprights, kuk'up.
B. Fire.
C. Wall, p'ahk.
D. Rat Trap.
E. Beds.
F. Altar.
G. Table with Metates.
H. Racks.

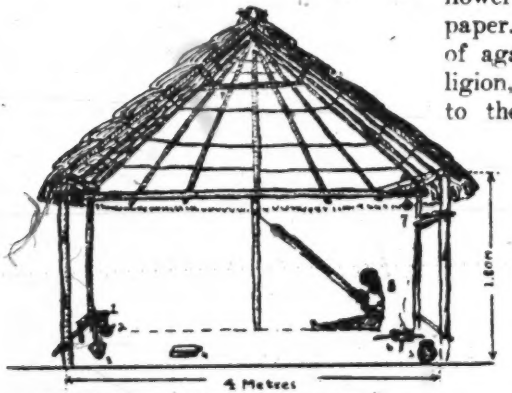


Fig. 286—El Encanto, Chis. Section of Bachajon House.

1. Table, ahk'en, with Metates.
2. Basket of clay, teavek lum.
3. Tenango water jar, k'ip.
4. Squatting chair, tzumate.
5. Olla, ocom.
6. Fire, kak'.
7. Racks, baxtet, with packages.
8. Woman weaving.

a central front and back post, and two posts close together on each side at the ends of the walls, supported the roof-beams. There were no horizontal members save the plates, following the line of the eaves. The rafters were built up from these direct to the ridge-pole, joined by light cross pieces, or thatching-poles, laid on outside. Near the top they were braced by a purlin of heavy logs on the inside. From floor to eaves it was 1.80 meters, and about the same from eaves to the ridge-pole. The floor was of hard dirt, fairly well levelled, and well swept. We were told that situations on hills, such as this, are commonly chosen to assure drainage, and that there is no orientation.

The altar, a table and a large cross decorated with flowers, pine-tips, and bits of paper, which will be spoken of again when discussing religion, was placed at the back to the right of the middle post. In front, to the right, was the table, *ahk'en*, on which were two metates, or grinding stones. They were legless, one end being raised slightly by propping with stones. The finer one was called *skaltca-tut* ("metate-small"), it was made of a fine, sandy lime-

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Bachajón



stone, *ton-al-ha'*, ("water stone"). The other, *skaltca-muk* ("big metate") was made of an igneous stone called *hayáltcak*, brought from San Martín. The *manos*, or smaller stones used for grinding on these, were called *miscabtca* (fig. 290). To the left, opposite this table, was the fire, *kak'*, built of two broken ollas and two small rocks, placed so that the logs could be laid star-fashion between them, and close enough together to support the tortilla griddle or an olla (fig. 291). Outside the house was another fire, with only three stones, on which was drying a basket full of *pinole*, *tcilim*, a fruit which is mixed with cacao in a form of chocolate. Over the house fireplace racks, *bartet*, were placed at the level of the eaves across the corner, and along the wall to the middle post, that things hung up there might be protected by the smoke from insects. All these things are indicated in the plan.

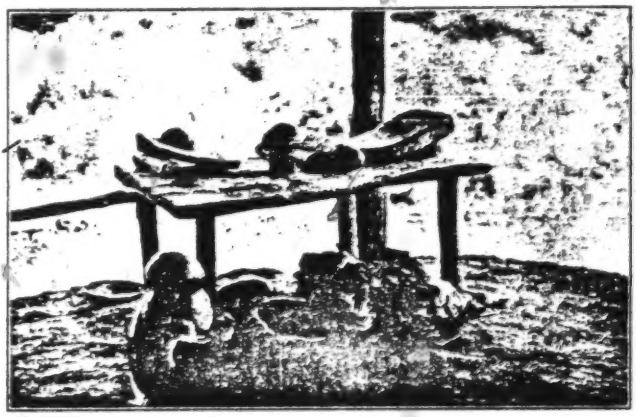


FIG. 290—Table with Metates.

A hammock, *aktci*, which we understood was not of native make, hung across the middle of the house. Two woven mats, *pOp*, the Spanish *petate*, lay on the beds. Beside this, the beds, and the table, the only thing that could properly be called furniture was a three-legged stool about 30 centimeters high, *matsumte*. Two mats of pounded bark, or tapa, *bat-te* ("bark tree"), or *bat manil tcahan*, were rolled up in a corner. First comers got the hammock to lie in, others sat on the low "squatting seats," *tsamate*, of which there were three, made each of half a log, peeled, and partially flattened on top, with a handle on one end.

The tortilla griddle was a flat, dish-like pottery affair, about 40 centimeters in diameter. There were five ollas, *ŏcom*, with plain

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9



remarkable. They make combs of one piece of wood, averaging 15 centimeters long, 8 wide, by 4 millimeters thick. The teeth are cut out of one of the long sides, running back less than half-way into the body of the piece. These teeth may be as fine as two in three millimeters, or as coarse as two in five millimeters; sometimes they are graded. The back is slightly arched. On the ends a piece of wood is left uncut, usually about four millimeters wide. The shape is not unlike the small Japanese combs to be found in most of our curio stores. The best examples are made from mahogany, chosen with a nice feeling for the effect of the grain. They are not worn, but used for combing the hair.

They make violins which are small copies of the European type. The instrument and bow are known by their Spanish names, *violina* and *arcilla*. The body is about 26 centimeters in greatest length and width; the neck, *tsutsuH-te*, projects about 30 centimeters. Save for a decoration of wavy lines on the back, the violin looks like a cheap toy fiddle. The strings, *tcucuix*, are of *mico de noche* (night-walking lemur) gut, save the G-string, which is of the usual type, bought in the towns. The bow-strings are of horse-hair treated with rosin. The tone is poor, lacking resonance.

One tobacco pipe, *bum*, was observed, which was a remarkable piece of whittling (fig. 307). It was about 14 centimeters long, made of one piece of mahogany, and apparently modeled after the American corn-cobs occasionally seen among the Ladinos. The bowl was roughly rounded, with a flat bottom. The stem was round, with a step in it at the middle, in imitation of the step in the mouth-piece of an ordinary pipe. The tube had been hollowed out with a hot wire. The tin-foil cap over the cork of a *Habanero* bottle had been hammered onto the base of the bowl, and two strips of tin-foil laid around the stem, each held on with a brad. It may be mentioned that the mahogany coloured prettily from handling and smoking, and that the flavour was sweet.

FIG. 307—Pipe.

Stools, with three legs let into a single, round piece, and rather rickety tables on the same principle, but four-legged, are made by the men, as well as the squatting-seats mentioned in describing the house.

Game furnishes an important part of the Indian's food supply. Wild boar, deer, howler monkey, *faisan*, *cojolite*, dove, and quail are hunted for food. The various large cats, alligator, lemurs, and many of the larger snakes are sought for their hides, which form a considerable article of trade. The chief weapon used in hunting is

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Cancuc



that he was invited into her house, presumably to take shelter from the evening rain that was beginning to fall. The house, of which he sketched a hurried plan (fig. 324) was more rectangular than is usual, the prevailing type being square with a pyramidal roof. He entered through a low doorway, closed with a wooden door on leather hinges. Although the ridge of the roof was high, the many cross poles reaching from the top of one wall to the other made it necessary to stoop. The writer squatted by the door, facing the fire, which smoked merrily in the closed room. The old woman immediately set to shaping a pile of tortillas for baking. Along either wall was a well-made bench, decorated with notches along the top and geometric designs on the back, similar to the benches on the Cabildo porch (fig. 325). These and a sturdy table that was stored on top of the stringers were said to be purely local products. By the door stood a big jar, a full meter in height, crude and undecorated (fig. 326). There was the usual collection of ollas and gourds, and one other new form, an open-mouthed pot about eight centimeters high and as many in diameter, flat bottomed, with a handle on one side, called *hütc* (fig. 327). In the thick smoke, it was hard to see anything. I was in-

FIG. 323—Cancuc, Chis. Drinking scaffold.

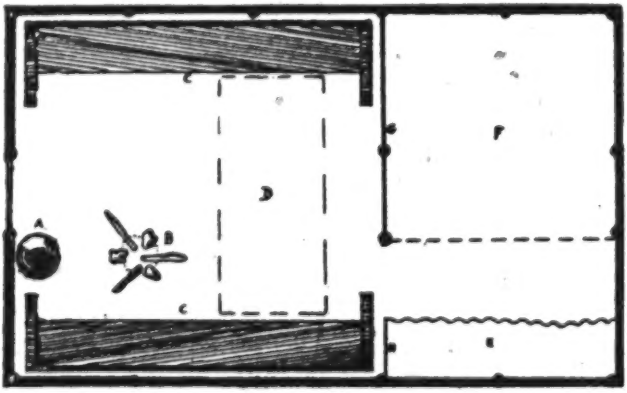



FIG. 324—Cancuc, Chis. Plan of House.

terested to note that my hostess' eyes watered nearly as much as my own. In the darker end of the house I could make out corn stacked neatly along one wall, and a partition that presumably hid the beds. For a while the woman answered the few questions that I could make her understand by means of signs, my half-a-dozen words of Tzeltal,

5: Blom & LaFarge A,E-4,5 (1925) 1927 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Cancuc



and her three words of Spanish. Then she grew hostile, answering everything with a plaintive *"Ma snaa,"* "I don't know." This went on for two or three minutes, then suddenly she flung open the door and waved me out with no uncertain gesture, saying something about the "Presidente Municipal," and the "Secretario." By this time it was pouring cats and dogs, but there was nothing to do save run for it.

Cancuc is not noted for any product. There are about the same arts and industries as at other towns, but the only ones that amount to anything like a specialty are netmaking and whittling combs. The combs are better and more neatly made than those of the Bachajon, and with a selection of the wood for grain that often produces very pretty combinations. The nets are made by the men, who

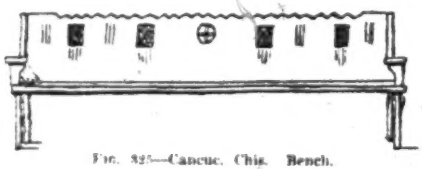


Fig. 325—Cancuc, Chis. Bench.

Fig. 327. Cancuc, Chis. Pottery. Hilte. (8 c.m. high).

Fig. 326—Cancuc, Chis. Tall Jar. (1 m. high).

go about rolling the twine or knitting as they walk. The process was described in the last chapter.

Being on the main highway, the government maintains a long shed, like a wagon-shed, thatched with leaves and grass, which is at the disposal of travelers. This relieves the Maestro of duties of entertainment. Towards nightfall, various groups came into camp here, a family of Mexicans, with a big fire, and goods piled high, two traders with their packs, some Chamulas, fine-looking men dressed in white wool tunics, with flowing cotton kerchiefs round their heads, and a couple of Tenejapeños with nets full of apples. The Chamulas, who are remarkably progressive Indians, had come in with a string of mules. After dark, the line of fires in the divisions of the shed, the talk, the fire-lit figures in their varied costumes, with the Church and houses rising on the terraced hill behind made as picturesque and charming a scene as one could possibly imagine.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle



of witchcraft. Today probably 95 percent of the new roofs are made of tile. Often the old roofs cannot be replaced with tile because the rafters were not built to support them. One result of the change has been the dependence on a carpenter to construct the gables, since they have to be lined up more accurately than they do with thatch or palm roofs.

House lots in the town center are preferred to those on the margins. As residents of house sites on the ejido lands at the margins of the town acquire wealth, one of the first things they try to do is acquire a house closer to the plaza. These lots are smaller, averaging about 500 square meters, while those farther out average 900 square meters. In a sample measurement of 100 house lots, the size ranged from 180 to 1,440 square meters, and the average size was 77 square meters. Considering the advantages of a large lot in growing chile fruits and corn, the preference for smaller central lots reveals the strong prestige factor influencing choice.

House furnishings include both purchased and homemade items. Sleeping accommodations consist of wooden bedboards, either nailed on a frame or simply laid on blocks and covered with a straw mat. Woolen blankets from Comitán are sold locally at a price of 24 pesos or for 20 pesos in San Cristóbal and 18 pesos in Comitán. Most households own two or three wooden benches which line the walls of the porch and are made locally. Small chairs are purchased from Chamula carpenters at a cost of 2 to 4 pesos, as well as a small table costing about 4. A higher table is provided for the saints' pictures and candle holders, incense burner, and flower vases or tin cans. Hooks are fashioned from the crotch of trees and suspended on the house posts. Wooden boxes are bought from Ladino carpenters in San Cristóbal at a cost of 10 to 20 pesos depending on size and workmanship and are used to store clothing. In addition to the homemade water holders, water carriers, comales, strainers, and bowls, handmade glazed ware from San Cristóbal, factory-made porcelain dishes, metal cooking pots, knives, and spoons are purchased. Gourds provide serving ware for ceremonial occasions. Stone grinding platforms and rollers are purchased in San Cristóbal for about 10 pesos. Two new items have become increasingly popular in the past five years: a metal grinding machine for corn, hand operated and costing from 40 to 60 pesos depending on the size and quality, and a hinged press for tortillas, costing 15 pesos if made

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle



square. Although this conception is contradicted by knowledge learned in school, the two concepts are not brought into direct opposition. The town still defines the outer limit of most meaningful social relations, and most people are not forced by the circumstances of their lives to deal with an understanding of the world as round. It is enough that the four "sides" of their village be protected by crosses at the points of entry. The important orientation points are the east, referred to as the "coming out of the sun," and the west, referred to as "the sleeping place of the sun." North and south are referred to as lowland and highland because of the topography. Compass orientation is important behaviorally only at death. The body of the deceased is laid out in the cemetery with the head to the east. Indians comment that the Ladinos lay the body out with the head to the west, but Indians of other towns, such as Zinacantan, also do so. The cemetery is located on the western side of the town.

## The House

The reference to the house in prayer as "the entry to suffering, inside the poverty" suggests the "cult of poverty" which Wolf (1955:459) points out as characteristic of closed corporate Indian communities. Most people conform to a standard house size of five square meters subdivided into an interior sleeping and living area and a porch (Fig. 8). The walls are made of mud strengthened with lime packed in a framework of poles supported on nine main posts. The roofs are pitched with four sheds rising steeply to a truncated ridge. Tiles are used in most new houses to cover the roof, but there are still many thatched palm or wooden shingle roofs. Corn and beans are stored in the rafters under the eaves of the house.

Inside the house, beds line the two side walls. If there is no cooking shack separate from the house, the hearth is placed in the center of the interior room. The grinding stone, raised on three posts, is placed to the left of the center post.

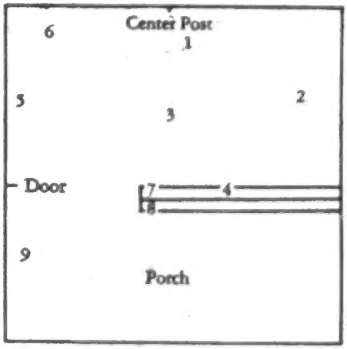
The porch is the area for ceremonial gatherings and for making and storing pottery. A table with the pictures of household saints set against the inside wall, is adorned with flowers and candles. During house fiestas, men sit on the benches lining the four walls of the porch, while the women sit inside in a semicircle.

7: Nash E-5 (1957-1967) 1970 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
Amatenango del Valle



342 [196] [621] [574] women sit inside in a semicircle. A house without a closed-in porch is referred to as a "cattle house" since it is considered inadequate for entertaining guests at ceremonial affairs. Townspeople prefer to choose as higher officials those who have houses with porches to accommodate visitors.

Fig. 8. Interior of a House




1. Seat of honor for women
2. Bed area for women of house
3. Hearth
4. Bench area for relatives of house
5. Bench area for visiting men
6. Mats or wooden board for visiting women
7. Honor seat for men (when inside house)
8. Honor seat for men outside house
9. Resting areas for male helpers

592 [513] Each member of the household has his place for sleeping, eating, and sitting. The youngest child sleeps with his parents, and older children sleep with siblings of the same sex or with their grandparents. Newly married couples living with their parents prefer to sleep in the cook shack if there is a separate structure. At mealtime, men and boys sit on small wooden chairs at a miniature table placed against the wall separating the interior from the porch, while women and girls kneel on straw mats near the hearth.

[264] [352]

342 352 562 574 796 Reference points inside the house (Fig. 8) are the center post where the

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meal for the house is buried in the inauguration ceremony (Chapter 1) and the door. Left and right are orientation points viewed from inside facing the door. Women of the house sit on mats near the center post. Female visitors occupy the mats to the left of the post and male visitors sit on benches lining the right wall and the interior wall. If it is a large ceremony for the ritual of inauguration or a celebration by the captain of a fiesta, only women enter the house, and the men sit on borrowed benches lining the walls of the porch.

Relative age is indicated by position in the seating arrangement. For women the seat of honor, occupied by the oldest woman present, is at the center post; other women of the household sit on a straw mat or board in order of descending age clockwise around the room. This order is modified by the presence of the grandmother who, if not a woman speaker, retires to the left (facing door from inside) corner. Visiting women sit to the right of the center post with the oldest immediately next to the post and those decreasing in age and stature to her right. For men, the seat on the bench nearest the door to the interior is called the "head of the bench"; this is the seat of the leading nakawane. The rest of the nakawanehetik sit along this bench in order of age. On the bench facing them sits the house owner, with his brothers and other visitors to his right in an age-ranked order. The b'alnialetik sit on the right wall bench.

Since prestigeful roles are usually a concomitant of age, especially in the house ceremonies, there is seldom conflict between age and role status. When conflict does occur, it is only seen at the top level; thus, the grandmother if not active because of age, retires to the corner while the woman speaker, who must order the women in the kitchen and receive visiting dignitaries, takes over this position. I have seen the leader of the č'om take precedence over the leader waiter who was older, because of the important role of the former.

When the family is carrying out a ritual, it is felt that the house should never be left vacant. The role of the "waiters" (maliwanehetik) is specifically that of remaining in the house while others of the celebrants are involved in ritual acts outside of the house. When the members of the bethal party go to the girl's house, for example, the waiters are left behind; or when the patient leaves with the curer and some of the curing

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342 party to go to the spring, at least one relative remains in the house to
796 greet the soul if it should precede the curing party.
[584]
[755] Behavior in household rituals is described in Chapters 1, 5, and 8.
[128]

## The Cabildo

344 The cabildo, called by the people of the town the "cold house," [1] was
[196] built following the revolution of 1915, when Piñeda's revolutionary soldiers
[175] destroyed the original colonial structure. The tiles of the roof were confiscated from a finca which the Indians invaded in 1941 in an unsuccessful attempt to gain additional lands. When they were unable to maintain their hold on the land, they burned the owner's house and took the tiles to the town center where they remain as a symbol of their defiant action. They refer to this event with pride. The cabildo houses the jail, equipped with a barred wooden door, in one of its wings, and the Ejido Commission office in the other.

344 Within the cabildo, each official has his established place. The cabildo is
352 furnished with a table at which the president and síndico sit on wooden
621 chairs made in the Indian town of Chamula. Four benches lining the
554 walls on either side of the entry provide seating for the civil officials. On
576 the right side (looking out at the plaza) sit the judges in order of rank;
[693] the regidores, in similar sequence follow them. The principales, and formerly the alfereces, sit on the left side when they appear for ceremonial occasions. This spatial allocation establishes drinking and greeting order as well. Visitors can go directly from one to another in the formal greeting of a handclasp and murmured "good morning, father," or "good afternoon, father," without violating age-respect patterns.

344 During court cases, the claimant and his supporters sit on the bench to
352 the left of the door; on other occasions the bench is occupied by visitors or
695 petitioners. The police sit on one of the two benches lining the outside
[625] wall, or retire to the kitchen, a wooden slat lean-to on the left wing of the

[171] 1. Bunzel (1952) notes that in prayers, the cabildo in Chichicastenango is referred to as "the cold house, the icy house." Although the Quiché term is not given in her manuscript, one can see a similarity in the rhyming couplets and metaphorical allusions in the prayers of the towns.

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building. When they leave the cabildo, they take their staffs as a mark of office.

The central room serves as a courthouse, a place for legislating and administering town affairs, for performing marriages, recording births and deaths, and for inaugurating new officials. Everyone who goes to the courthouse has a specific purpose for being there. Regular attendance means that an established seat and place in the order of greeting and drinking is accorded—even to the anthropologist.

Each day the civil officials assemble at the town hall about eight in the morning and take their accustomed places. Sitting is an official act. In listing the duties of the president, for example, "sitting at the table" was given first in order of importance of his functions by two informants, and in the case of the judges, "sitting at the bench" was listed first.

The president opens official mail and dictates responses to the secretary, now an Indian of the village, who pecks out the letters on an ancient portable typewriter. Since typing is a new skill for him, he makes many errors, and his retrials are accepted with patience and sometimes joking by the president and judges. When the president has an order for the police, it is transmitted to the regidor, who in turn passes it on to the police. The police always carry out their orders in pairs. Interruptions occur as petitioners enter. Men come in to announce the birth of a child and receive the name of the saint's day from the president, who consults the calendar; creditors arrive to request that a debtor be jailed for nonpayment of a loan or interest. When official visitors arrive from the I.N.I. or from the Ejido Commission, the president usually rises and stands at attention, agreeing with everything said. If it is an affair of some importance, the discussion may be continued in the schoolhouse, since the teacher has gained political importance in the town. The Indians rarely oppose departmental or federal officials directly; when they are unwilling to comply with an order, they stall for time, figuring that in the long run time is with them.

When the cabildo serves as a courtroom, it provides a setting for airing not only the grievance which precipitated the court action, but also the entire spectrum of personal relations involved. More women than men resort to court, since the drinking customs for men mean that they are more often the violators of norms. Behavior in the courtroom is controlled by a

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come the domain of the schoolmaster, who represents federal influence in the local community. He has rebuilt parts of the structure in the thirteen years he and his family have lived and worked in this building; it was his fortress when the Indians threatened to kill him for building a chicken coop obtruding into the street, and again when he interceded in a case of homicide. He has a small arsenal stored in his bedroom in preparation for any reversal of his position in the community. The school is his platform, the area he controls and from which he shouts to his compadres—the storekeeper, the fiscal, and the president—to come speak with him.

The long building is subdivided into four classrooms and the living quarters of the schoolmaster's family. The classrooms are furnished with crude benches and tables; blackboards and charts of birds, animals, and the alphabet decorate the walls. The back porch, converted to classrooms to accommodate the three hundred and fifty children, overflows with benches. The students' own materials—a notebook, pencil, and erasers—are provided by their parents. When a notebook is filled, the students industriously erase all the marks and reuse the book until it falls apart.

When I was in the village, the schoolmaster often encouraged visitors to share a Coca-Cola with him in his office. Here, surrounded by his books, his collection of artifacts of both genuine and spurious origin, a picture of the district inspector of federal schools pinning a medal on his chest, the flag of the Mexican republic, he could speak freely of the personal attacks and frustrations and of the rare satisfactions he encountered "in bringing civilization to the town." As he began to build up his political power in the community, the president and síndico often consulted with him on town affairs. Agents of the federal or departmental offices who came to town frequently communicated with him directly before going to the cabildo. The school became the arena for working out political programs and strategies. The schoolmaster prided himself on being the primary channel of communication between the outside world and the village.

The conflict of interest between the schoolmaster and the parents of the children over attendance in school has been ameliorated in recent years with the acceptance by some of the parents of education as an advantage. In the early years of compulsory education, physical force was used to round up the children. The traumatic experience of his first day in school

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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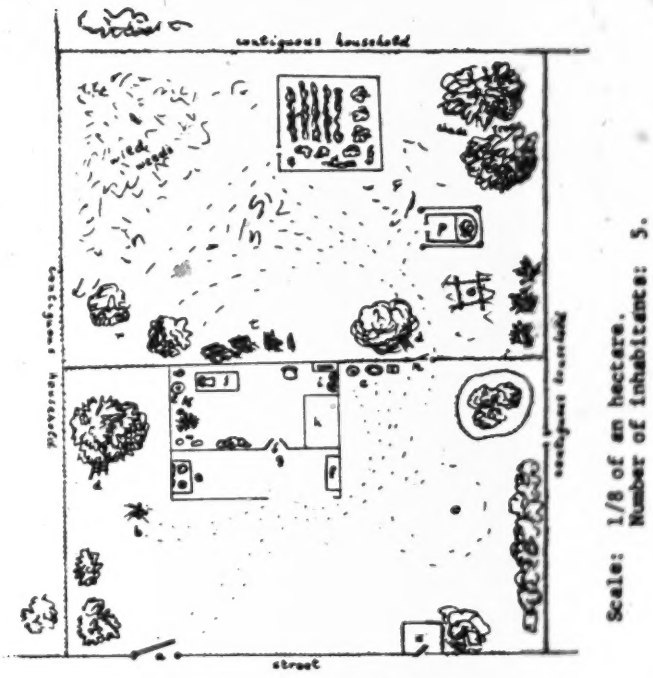


Fig. 10.--Model of a Standard Household

a--entrance gate
b--nixtamal washing-pot
c--water pots
d--chicken coop in a tree
e--Saint's altar in the corridor
f--bench for receiving visitors
g--double door
h--wooden bed
i--petates (mats) chest and chair
j--table for making tortillas (with the grinding stone or metate)
k--molino and fire place
l--water pot inside the house
m--little stools for seating during meals and stored bags
n--gate to back yard
o--raised pig-pen
p--temascal (steam bath)
q--garden with chillis, and "tomatoes"
r--peach trees
s--pig-pen with gate to the street
t--fire-wood drying

8: Hunt E-4,5 (1958)1962 NV9 Tzeltal NV9
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Fig. 11.--House Viewed from the Street Gate